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Man Comes Forward to Describe an Alleged Extended Sexual Relationship He Had at Age 14 With Kevin Spacey

By E. Alex Jung

Kevin Spacey. Photo: Daniel Zuchnik/WireImage

Earlier this week, the actor Anthony Rapp alleged that Kevin Spacey made a sexual advance toward him in 1986, when he was 14 years old. After Rapp's allegation, Spacey released a statement in which he claimed not to remember the incident in question and also came out as a gay man. Since then, others have come forward with further allegations against Spacey, including the filmmaker Tony Montana, who said that Spacey groped him in public in 2003, and the actor Roberto Cavazos, who said he witnessed Spacey court and inappropriately touch younger male actors at the Old Vic Theatre, where Spacey was the artistic director from 2004 to 2015.

After Rapp's public statement, a man who was friendly with a member of the *New York* staff approached the magazine to talk about Spacey. At the age of 14, he says, he began a sexual relationship with the actor, who was then 24, that ended with what he describes as an attempted rape. The man is now a 48-year-old artist living on the East Coast with a long-term partner, and he wishes to remain anonymous. "I have worked really hard to have a nice life and feel safe, and I'm

not giving that up for him,” he told me, sitting outside on a park bench. “I don’t want them to be able to find their way back to me.”

He first met Spacey in 1981, when the actor was a guest teacher at a weekend acting class he took in Westchester County; he was then a 12-year-old student. Spacey was 22 and working in the New York theater scene. They met again by chance in line at Shakespeare in the Park in 1983, when the student was 14 years old; Spacey had made his Broadway debut in Henrik Ibsen’s *Ghosts* the year prior. After that meeting, he says, Spacey gave him his phone number, and the two began a sexual relationship.

The former student came forward, he says, because he was enraged at Spacey’s response to Rapp’s story. We have done our best to verify his account of his time with Spacey. We confirmed with two sources that Spacey taught at the acting school in 1981; checked the plausibility of dates and other details in his account; and spoke with people close to the former student, who said that he had spoken about his relationship with Spacey as far back as the 1990s. We also spoke with his current therapist, who confirmed that he began speaking about it in sessions in 2015. And we have confirmed the other abusive relationship the former student discusses. We reached out to Spacey to talk about the relationship. He responded through his lawyer, who wrote in an email, “Mr. Spacey absolutely denies the allegations.”

The following is a condensed and lightly edited transcript of our conversation. We are presenting it as he told it to us because of the nature of the relationship, which is best left to the former student to describe. He entered it enthusiastically as a young adolescent and continued to see Spacey until the unwanted assault. Consent is rarely simple, even among adults. It is especially complicated in the mind of a 14-year-old. This is his account.

When did you first meet Kevin Spacey?

I went to Saturday acting classes in Westchester County, outside of New York, around 1981. They would bring working theater professionals in to teach us. I was 12, and he taught at the school, maybe just for half a year. He wasn’t a known person at that time. He was probably just beginning to be a working actor.

What was the school called?

It didn’t really have a name. It was an hour of movement, an hour of acting, and an hour of musical comedy. It was in a church, and it was a bunch of kids between the ages of probably 11 and 18, singing and acting.

When you were at school, did Kevin Spacey give you attention in that way?

No. I knew that he knew who I was, but no there was no physical attention. There was no grooming or attention like “Let’s go out for an ice cream.”

Was there ever any gossip around the students about him?

No. We were not discussing sexuality. I mean, my group was 12.

Do you remember what church it was held at?

It was housed inside of Saint Thomas’s Church in Mamaroneck, New York. There were different age groups, and he came and taught acting classes, and then went away. I met him again the summer of 1983, when I was 14, at Shakespeare in the Park. I was waiting on line with my family. I saw him, and he saw me, and while my parents were waiting for tickets, he and I went for a walk.

And that didn’t strike anyone as strange?

No. I had been sexually active for a year then, also with a person ten years my senior — a member of my family, my cousin. Throughout that period, I’m giving off very obvious signals about my relationship with my cousin. I’m wearing

his clothes. I'm sleeping over at his house. And my parents are in what seems to me a very profound state of denial about what's going on. They know I'm gay. I came out to my parents in the eighth grade, when I was 13.

It's a shameful moment in the history of my family. But my cousin had sexually abused my older brother when my brother was 11 and he was 17 or 18. He was forgiven by my family and kind of invited back into the fold. My mother told him [to stay away from me]: "If you touch [him], I'll kill you." But then I start sleeping over at his house and wearing his clothes, and that goes on really for a year before anybody asks me any questions.

Did you feel your relationship with your cousin was consensual?

At the time, I would've told you that relationship was completely consensual. That we were boyfriends. I would've said, "Yeah, I'm 14, but I'm really smart. I'm really together. And it's normal that 25-year-old men would want me to be their boyfriend because I'm a grown-up."

Okay, so you are walking with Kevin.

Yeah, and we're talking. He was kind of in high seduction mode and gave me his phone number and asked me to call him. He said, "I want to see you, and I want you to come to my apartment." He said he'd always been really drawn to me at the acting classes, but had stayed away because I was 12. So I'm like [*laughs*] ... now that I was 14. That was probably a 15-minute walk, and then I went back to be with my parents.

How did you feel?

I felt like I'd won the lottery. A little drunk with it and very delighted with the attention. I was like a cute, plump little kid who went through puberty really fast and came out the other side as somebody that grown-ups were looking at and saying was beautiful. If your father has never rubbed your head or patted you, and if you have suspected your whole life that he is actually repulsed by you or just bored by you [*laughs*], you're hungry. And I had gone through puberty at 11. I had to make this happen. And I was terrified to do that with a boy of my own age. You could be beat up.

After you talked in the park, when did you and Kevin first meet?

I called him on the phone the next day, and he told me how he was in love with me and wanted to see me. I went and saw him at an apartment he was renting on the Upper West Side. He had a black Labrador named Snake. He might've been walking that dog in Central Park when we bumped into him that night. We started a sexual relationship that first visit, which mostly involved me fucking him.

Did he ever talk about his personal life?

There were pictures around his house of Jennifer Jason Leigh. I remember him talking about her as his girlfriend.

Did you know if he was sleeping with anyone else?

I assumed that he was sleeping with Jennifer Jason Leigh.

How did the sexual part start happening? Did you talk?

We talked a little bit, but it was more like, "You know why you're here, I know why we're here." I don't remember a lot of conversation. I remember a lot of physical activity.

And how did you feel after the first time with Kevin?

Dizzy.

What happened afterward?

I think we lay around and talked some. I was probably just there for a couple hours. I remember feeling like [I was] cheating, going back and forth between these two men.

In your mind, at that age, there was a kind of drama.

Oh my God. I'm sexually so compelled with this one man. With my cousin, I'm beginning to perceive his mental illness and his endless need for me at that time. I was part of a troupe of kids working with the director and writer Liz Swados, and that winter, Liz and I got together and she recognized that I was in a lot of psychic distress. She pursued it to the point where I confessed to her that I was trapped in this relationship with my cousin and wanted to get out, but felt like he would fall apart if I left him. She helped me get out. She gave me the words and explained to me also that 25-year-olds don't have sex with 14- and 15-year-olds, that that's wrong, that I was not the guilty party and I could leave.

How many times did you meet up with Kevin after that first meeting?

My memory is that we met up three or four more times with, again, proclamations that we loved each other. Also, [he was telling me] that there were producers who were really interested in me as an actor and that he wanted to get me auditions. He talked about some play and how he wanted to get me an audition for it. He hadn't seen me act since I was 12.

Did anything come of that?

No, it didn't result in anything professional.

Did you ever talk to Kevin about his work?

I knew at that point he was starting to be a working actor. That was very glamorous to me, that he was having the beginnings of some success in that world. Enough that it seemed like he was going to get me these auditions. That all seemed very believable. When you're 14, a lot of things seem believable, especially if it's something nice. I was acting professionally at that time, so that's another part of why all of this made sense to me: I was commuting into New York and acting and making money.

You were a working child actor.

Of course I have a 24-year-old boyfriend and I'm going out to punk clubs. I'm lying to my parents about all of this. And I'm "cheating" on my cousin/boyfriend to go see Kevin Spacey. I'm very caught up in the drama, and it's now early winter. So now I'm 15. He was in a different apartment, also on the Upper West Side, and I called him from a pay phone, like you used to do, and said, "I'm close by. Can I see you?" I had like 15 minutes before I had to meet my parents and some family friends for dinner.

He told me to come over, and I went to the apartment. And I thought we were going to kiss and tell each other we loved each other and I was going to go. But he wanted to have sex, and this time he wanted to fuck me, which had never happened to me before.

He said he wanted to top you?

He did not say. He just did. I guess he must have come up behind me and yanked down my baggy jeans, and he goes to fuck me and I'm like, "No, I don't want to." And he pushes hard, and grabs me, and starts shoving up against my asshole, and it hurts like a motherfucker. I again tell him no, and he tries again. I am strong enough, thank God, both somewhere in my brain and in my body, to get him off of me. I'm sturdy, thankfully. I throw him off of me and I run crying down the stairs and out into the street and then suck it all up and go have dinner.

Did he penetrate you?

No. I don't think so. I know it hurt, so something went somewhere to the point where it hurt, but I remember feeling like I got him. I did not feel like I had been fucked.

What would you call it?

I always have said, "He tried to rape me." I told him I didn't want that, he went again to do it, I told him no, he went again and pushed harder and grabbed me and pushed harder. I don't know how I would see that as anything besides an attempted rape, which I was able to thwart.

Did you feel afraid?

I don't know that I felt afraid. I felt betrayed, or in danger, or trapped. In some way it was like, "Oh, I've been lured into a trap."

I called his number a few days later and there was no answer — he's gone, and I do not hear from him ever again. One year later, I'm an apprentice at the Berkshire Theater Festival. I see that he's at the Williamstown Theater Festival [*Spacey starred in Williamstown's production of Real Dreams in 1984*], and I contact him there and say I want to see him. And at the last minute I call him and say, "Why didn't you ever call me? Why didn't you ever do anything? I don't want to see you."

And what?

He was like, "Oh, come over. I'm going to drive over." I had maintained this weird obsession with him, and I turned it at the last minute and said, "I don't want to see you. Don't come." So that was that. And that has been the extent of my contact with him.



Kevin Spacey and Robin Bartlett in Williamstown's production of *Real Dreams* in 1984. Photo: Courtesy of Williamstown Theater/Bob Marshak

Did you ever tell your parents?

Nope. But then I remember talking to my friends in my early 20s about it, as he started to get prizes and be in plays and later win a Tony. In the late '80s, I remember seeing him in the movie *Heartburn*, playing the thief, and this rage that he was rising up in the world and that I was going to have to look at this person for the rest of my life.

How did you feel about him when you were 14?

I was obsessed with him.

And how do you feel about those feelings now?

You feel things full body, in a way, when you're adolescent, right? And some people never learn, but in adolescence, you certainly don't know yet that a very powerful sexual feeling is not love. You haven't found that out yet, and some people don't ever find that out. I was just full of this lust. And that's why, one year later, even after he tried to rape me, some part of me wanted to see him again.

When did your thinking around what had happened start to change?

When do I start to think of him as a sexual predator?

Yeah. I assume you would call him that now.

I would call him that to his face. I would call him a pedophile and a sexual predator. When I turned 25, I looked at every 14-year-old boy I could see, to try to understand what those men had seen, because I still on some level thought I had been a tiny adult. That whole year I was 25, I tried to just see the ones who were like six-foot-two, and 200 pounds — they all looked like children. They all looked like somebody who was 10 years old four years ago. Nobody looks fuckable. Nobody ... I couldn't conjure it up. I couldn't conjure up the desire. It was nauseating to think of having sex with them, and that was, I think, certainly when I understood, on a very deep level, these men were fucked up. Up until then, I just thought about him as somebody who had really done me wrong and tried to rape me, but not as somebody who had functioned as a predator. And then, if you're interested in sexual predation, you start to read about it, and you realize all these patterns and techniques, and it all kind of falls within a set of practices.

Is that what you did? You read about it?

Yeah, like I would talk to psychologists. I know that pedophilia is a sexuality, like homosexuality. You can't necessarily — you can't be cured of it. It is in your brain. That's one of the tragic things about it for those people. You can become someone who does not act on those impulses, but the understanding in the psychological community is ... that's your sexuality. That's what you're stuck with. You read and you realize, "Oh yeah, they do this thing." My cousin had done it. They make themselves beloved. They're charming and helpful and kind so that the community invites them deeper in. They make themselves indispensable, and that also is a double thing. So that when they are accused, people don't believe it. "Not him. Mr. Wallace is so great, and he takes the kids camping."

So in your view, this is who he is?

He is a pedophile. When you look at his statement, you realize also he's profoundly narcissistic. He thinks this is about being caught that he's gay. And then he is spinning it, right? "Oh, people like gays now. So I'll throw them that. I'll say I'm gay and I will betray my whole community and do something else that conflates pedophilia with male homosexuality." That's great. Thank you for that. And that was probably the thing that made me want to talk more than anything else. How repulsive that was.

Okay. I guess this is speaking a little more generally about relationships that gay men have, and often I think that there are older-younger kinds of relationships.

Yeah. My partner now is 11 years older than I am. I mean, some part of me, almost anyone I've ever been seriously involved with has been older. What's your question?

Do you think that a 14- or 15-year-old is capable of being in a relationship with a man who is a decade older?

No. What you need in a relationship, any relationship, involves a power struggle. But you have to start from some kind of equal footing. And a 15-year-old is a child. Everything is already off-kilter. You're taking from somebody to get this thing you want.

What did he take?

From me?

Yeah.

Luckily, I threw him off me. I saved myself in many ways in that minute from the much deeper trauma that would've come from having been raped. Thankfully, some part of me was strong enough to be like, "Fuck no." I'm so grateful to that little 14-year-old, that he didn't say, *I have to let him do this or he'll stop loving me*. What he left me with, more than what he took from me, was a sense that I deserved this. And that's the knot I'm still untangling. Every time I've ever told the story, I am compelled to tell people how seductive I was towards these men. I'm compelled to tell people how much I wanted these things because some very deep part of me feels like it's lying if I don't say that. If I don't describe how consensual it was. Some part of me takes a lot of work to understand that I can have been the victim of someone and not be a victim. So that's all fucked up in my head.

My introductions to love were, *You're a thing. You're a tasty thing*. And if you didn't have that, you would have no worth.

Does the question of consent feel complicated to you?

Yeah. Sexual abuse is complicated. It's like when you're a kid, right, and somebody accidentally touched your penis with a towel, it feels nice. You can't help that. Like rubbing up against the bed, it feels nice. So if you're little and somebody touches your penis, it's terrifying and shameful. At the same time, neurologically, it's pleasurable. You're left with that forever. You can't help it. Teenagers have to be protected from themselves. Children have to be protected from themselves. That's what adults do. They protect them and they create spaces for them like training wheels where they can begin to get ready. In an ideal world. This is not an ideal world.

What made you want to talk about Kevin Spacey now?

The low-level guilt that I've kind of carried all this time of knowing, in my brain, that these people repeat offend. They don't stop. It's never one and done. Pedophiles, sexual predators, that's part of it. So knowing full well that he was continuing to do this, that he was out there at large, has made me feel ashamed. So that makes me want to talk. I'm grateful to Anthony Rapp for talking, that opened that door for me. Obviously the most right thing is to put my name and speak, and the second most right thing is to be anonymous and speak. And that's what I can do. If it was 1977 and it was a newspaper, and I didn't feel like the world was going to swarm in through the wormhole of my phone and invade my life and strip me of things, and if I also didn't feel like that was going to become my name ... I don't want that to be my name.

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